

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 remain in this application. By this Amendment, the specification, Fig. 18, and claims 4, 8, 9, 11, 13, 20, 27, 30 and 31 are amended. Reconsideration based on the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. THE SPECIFICATION MEETS ALL FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

The Office Action objects to the Abstract for various informalities. The Abstract has been amended. Withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

II. FIG. 18 MEETS ALL FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

The Office Action objects to Fig. 18 for an informality. Fig. 18 has been amended to include "Related Art" in the legend of Fig. 18. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

III. CLAIM 8 SATISFIES ALL FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

The Office Action objects to claim 8 for an informality. Claim 8 has been amended to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection to claim 8 is respectfully requested.

IV. THE CLAIMS DEFINE ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Office Action rejects claims 1-31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,848,536 to Machida. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Machida does not disclose, teach or suggest a method or apparatus comprising, inter alia, "impressing a voltage on each of the plurality of electrodes so as to generate an electrode charge code identical to a plate charge code induced in the substrate plate to levitate the substrate plate against the transport plane by electrostatic forces," as recited in independent claims 1 and 4, or "impressing a voltage on each of a plurality of electrodes so as to levitate a substrate plate against a plane by electrostatic forces" as recited in independent claims 9 and 13.

Machida, at e.g., col. 2, lines 25-28 and Abstract, discloses a transport plane (electrodes 1) that is positioned over the substrate plate (wafer 6). In Machida, the non-

contact state between the substrate plate and the transport plane is provided by balancing attractive electrostatic forces between the plate and the plane and air repulsion force provided by air blown from air nozzles 7 that are provided with the electrodes 1. This is different than claims 1, 4, 9 and 13, in which the non-contact state between the substrate plate and the transport plane is maintained by the repulsive force provided by the electrostatic force only.

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 4, 9 and 13 are patentable over the applied art. Claims 2, 3, 5-8, 10-12 and 14-31, which depend from claims 1, 4, 9 and 13, respectively, are likewise patentable over the applied art for at least the reasons discussed above. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

V. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Amended Abstract
Replacement Drawing Sheet
Petition for Extension of Time

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